

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

ARISE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE; ~~LOISTE?~~;  
NEW ENGLAND STATE-AREA  
CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP; REV.  
TALBERT W. SWAN, II; NORMAN W.  
OLIVER, DARLENE ANDERSON,  
GUMERSINDO GOMEZ; FRANK BUNTIN;  
RAFAEL RODRIQUEZ; and DIANA NURSE,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD and SPRINGFIELD  
ELECTION COMMISSION,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 05-30080 MAP

**AFFIDAVIT OF FRANK H. BUNTIN**

I, Frank H. Buntin, hereby certify as follows:

1. I have lived in Springfield, MA for the past 45 years and have been active in political and civic affairs. I am President of the Springfield Branch of the NAACP and have been an active member of the organization the entire time I have lived in Springfield. I have a Masters Degree in Education from Boston University and have taught school and have been active in education issues.
2. I ran for Springfield City Council the first year that Bud Williams won. The Springfield newspaper came out with an editorial saying that we were both good candidates and the voters should pick one of us. This was indicative of the attitude of the majority of whites in Springfield that there should be only one minority on the City Council at a time.
3. I ran for City Council two times and for School Committee two times. Despite getting a lot of votes from the African American community I was not able to win the white vote and thus was not able to get elected. Under the **at-large** election system, the minority vote is weakened because all the whites come out and vote for the white candidates, making it much easier for them to win. Even today, when whites are not the majority in Springfield anymore, they are still the voting majority and can still more easily win city-wide elections than minority candidates.

4. Generally it has been very difficult for African American and Latino candidates to win city-wide elections in Springfield. I remember when Robert McDonald ran for City Council and he won the primary because people thought he was Irish. After he won and the newspaper published his picture and people saw he was African American, he lost the election. Most of the African American candidates who have won have been viewed as the "safe" candidates, those who were perceived as less threatening to the white majority. Many of the African American candidates who lost were more qualified than the white candidates who won. African American candidates with Ph.D.'s and master's degrees have lost to white candidates with just a high school diploma; for example when Jessie Parks lost to Fran Coughlin in the School Committee election.
5. When I ran for City Council a white candidate who was also running asked me to take her around my African American neighborhood to introduce her to voters and she would take me around her white neighborhood. She got a good reception in the African American community, but I got a much less cordial reception in her neighborhood. One white voter came up to us and told the white candidate "you've got my vote" and pointedly ignored me.
6. There is a long history of school segregation in Springfield. The NAACP went into Federal Court in the 1960's and then state court in the 1970's to desegregate the schools. The schools in the minority community were inferior to schools in the white community - inferior buildings, old books and few supplies and unqualified teachers.
7. Today, a large majority of minority children are termed special education students. Yet, most of the students who are placed in out of district private special ed schools, are white.
8. There is also a history of housing discrimination in Springfield. When I first moved to Springfield and was teaching in the schools I went to the housing authority to inquire about housing. I wanted to live in a white neighborhood because the housing was better - but was not permitted to. When I told my principal of my problems finding housing he said "my other colored teachers never had a problem finding a place to live." I eventually moved into veterans housing and was one of only three Black families living there. A Black doctor was denied housing at Amore Village, a predominantly white single family area, and he filed a complaint. The newspaper ran an editorial saying that housing discrimination does take place in Springfield. Recently, a white Housing Authority director was appointed, despite the fact that the majority of people in public housing are Black and Hispanic.
9. Despite the fact that the majority of people in public housing and Section 8 housing in Springfield are African American and Latino, recently three new white members were appointed to the Springfield Housing Authority Board.

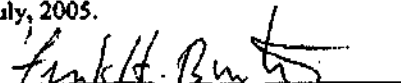
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10. The city of Springfield has few employees of color and very few if any **people** who **speak** Spanish. Even today 80% of the teachers in the school system (which has a **minority** enrollment of 80%) are white. There was one **Black teacher**, Lucille Gibbs, who **applied** to be a principal over times, and each time she was turned down by the School Committee. Many **Blacks have** had **difficulty** being hired as **teachers** in the **Springfield** school system.
11. The Springfield police and fire departments are predominantly white despite **being** under consent decrees requiring them to hire minorities.
12. There is a **history** of **racial animosity** and harassment by the Springfield **police** department against African Americans **and** Latinos. **There is** **extensive** racial **profiling** with many minorities getting stopped by the police **while** driving for no reason. When I worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, I was stopped by the **Springfield** police and told I ran a **red** light, **when I didn't**. **When** the white officer saw my **federal** government **sticker**, he said "you're one of those big shots". I asked for his badge number and he became **enraged**. **I** felt very threatened and felt like **I might** be shot. Two other police **officers** came by and **I** later filed a complaint. A **month** later I was informed that they **determined** the **police** officer had done nothing wrong.
13. Recently a **Black school** principal who was having a diabetic **seizure** was assaulted by the police. The white officer involved was found not to be in the **wrong** despite having three other incidents on his record,
14. African Americans and Latinos in Springfield **share** many common concerns particularly in the area of education. Both communities are concerned with low test **scores**, high drop out rates, lack of academic **achievement** and equity issues. Most recently **I** worked **very closely** with Orlando Santiago a **Latino** parent who is **Vice** President of the PTO at Central High School to oppose the new boundary plan for the Springfield schools. We both believe that this plan will further segregate the **Springfield schools** and will not increase the quality of **education** for African American and Latino children.
15. **I** am currently helping **Orlando** Santiago in his campaign for **School Committee**. **I** will encourage people in the African American community to vote for him because **I** believe he **will** make a good School Committee member and **will seek** to improve education for all **children**.

Signed under penalties of perjury, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2005.
  
 Frank H. Buntin